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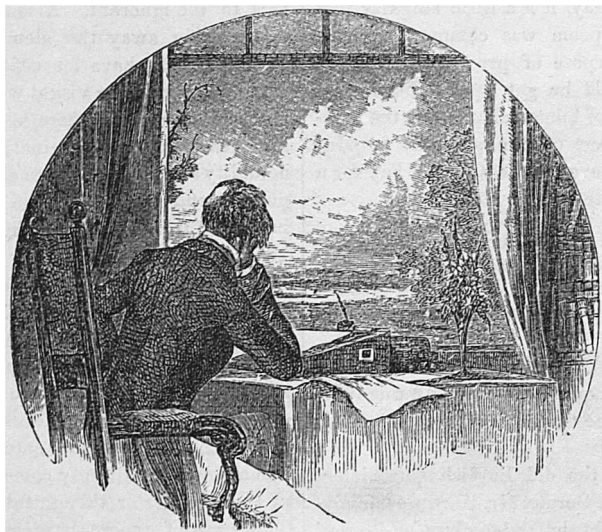
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### M A R I A N .

My windows on a landscape look,  
Arcadian, fresh and fair;  
The sunshine streams across my book,  
The wind blows back my hair—

Blows back my hair from temples thin,  
From hollow, languid eyes,  
For many days and weeks shut in  
From sight of summer skies.

My brain is busied with old dreams,  
Nor thinks, nor hopes aright—  
The sunlight builds its golden beams  
Before my feverish sight.

It builds me there, a house of air,  
A castle wide and high,  
With turrets gleaming tall and fair  
Against a cloudless sky.

I walk its unsubstantial floor,  
Through vistas bright and wide,  
On, on, from cloudy door to door,  
With Marian by my side.

Within the book the sweetest words  
That ever poet wrote,  
Like troops of heaven's melodious birds,  
In sunshine sing and float.

Should fancy follow where they lead,  
Those soft, persuasive rhymes,  
Through many a paradise 'twould tread,  
In more than earthly climes.

And it would see the silver dew  
Shine on immortal flowers;  
Would walk beneath the trees that grow  
In ancient Grecian bowers;

Would hear the 'wild, sweet bugle' blown;  
The 'horns of elf-land' wound;  
But, oh, I hear a sweeter tone,  
Than any rhyme can sound.

Wide swings the Past its silent gates—  
I glide within, and lo!  
Young Marian by the elm-tree waits  
As in the long ago.

For, shadowing all my house of air,  
There stands a stately elm;  
No tree so tall, exalted, fair,  
Was in this whole broad realm!

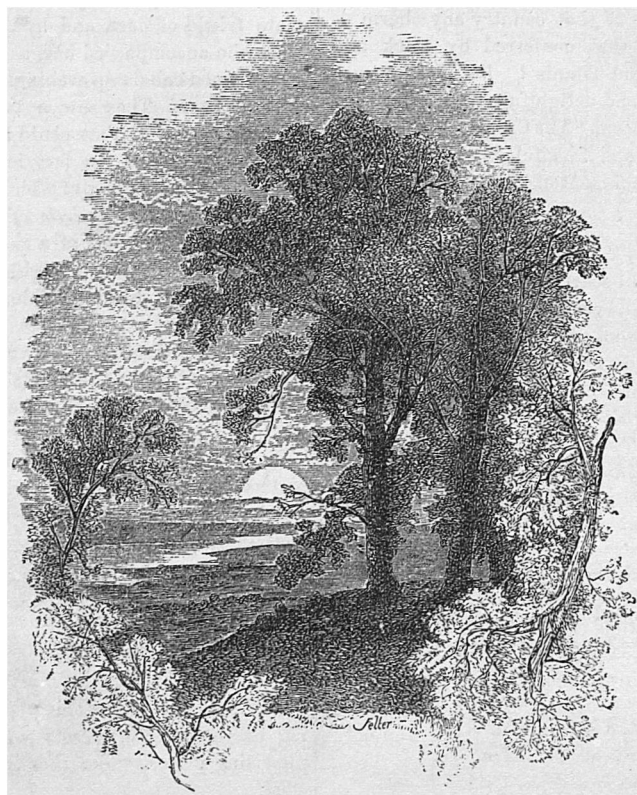
Unmindful of the fiercest storm,  
Of lightning, wind or rain,  
It lifts on high its glorious form,  
The princess of the plain.

And as I gaze upon it, still  
I see, with memory's eyes,  
Its murmuring foliage start and thrill,  
Its emerald branches rise.

I do not see the shattered trunk,  
Blackened and rent in twain;  
The spacious shadow, wan and shrunk,  
Once darkening all the plain!

I only see a stately tree,  
And Marian standing there,  
With lustrous eyes that looked for me  
Through fluttering wind-moved hair.

On summer mornings, years ago,  
I sought the dewy hill,  
To mark the gradual, rosy glow  
Through all the valley thrill.





On summer nights I could not sleep  
For that enchanted sight,  
Of valleys, shadowed soft and deep,  
Slow glimmering into light;

While all the heaven-lit heights of morn,  
The valleys of the night,  
Because of Marian, seemed new-born,  
And bathed in fresh delight.

Pure gold was on the orient hills,  
Strange stars were bright above,  
And perfect lilies fringed the rills  
Because of Marian's love.

Her love!—'twas here, one happy day,  
I found my love returned—  
That first I dared to kiss away  
The vivid blush which burned

Upon her cheeks—yes, in this room  
I won that faltering word!  
The roses doubled their perfume,  
The honeysuckles stirred,

Leaning within the sill, to hear  
That murmur low and sweet,  
Which we ourselves could hardly hear,  
Our hearts so loudly beat.

That happy day, the heavens let down,  
A wreath of roses red,  
Grown in the bowers of bliss, to crown  
My young, triumphant head.

But these are asphodels which wreath  
My languid temples now;  
All glittering with the dews of death  
They bind my pallid brow.

Betrothed were Marian and I—  
The marriage-day was set,  
The tide of love beat bright and high  
O'er fear, distrust, regret.

We did not care to look beyond  
The present good possessed—  
We were so young, we were so fond,  
We only could be blest.

Angels unclosed the gates of day  
Upon our wedding-morn;  
Like burnished gold the sunshine lay  
Upon the tasseled corn.

The meadows dimpled with delight,  
The fluttering poppies bent  
And whispered, "to the bridal night  
Their sorceries should be lent."

A few sweet roses, pale with fear,  
Yet flushed with love and hope,  
Said "they had lingered late that year,  
For the bride's wreath to ope."

My Marian, near the appointed hour,  
Stood 'neath her favorite tree,  
Selecting from a hundred flowers  
One peerless rose for me.

Like burnished gold the sunlight shone,  
O'er all the glowing realm—  
One cloud came swiftly up, alone,  
And drifted o'er the elm.

The bridesmaids note the tokens first;  
"Come, Marian, come!" they call;  
When, suddenly, the tempest burst  
Above the elm-tree tall.

It burst upon the lofty-elm,  
In lightning, wind and rain;  
Then a strange darkness did o'erwhelm  
My reeling heart and brain.

That darkness still o'erclouds my days,—  
I know not what God will—  
Nor where the soul of Marian stays,  
Its promise to fulfil.

My house of air doth fall and fade—  
The graveyard now I see,  
Where Marian's bridal-bed was made,  
And where she waits for me.

